

The Papacy might denounce usurers, but, as the centre of the most highly organized administrative system of the age, receiving rents and tithes from Europe, and receiving them in money at a time when the revenue of other Governments still included personal services and payments in kind, it could not dispense with them. Dante put the Cahprine money-lenders in hell; but a Pope gave them the title of "peculiar sons of...the, ..Roman Church."¹IM Grosstge rebuked the Lombard bankers, and a bishop of London expelled them, but papal protection brought them back," Archbishop Peckham, a few years later, had to implore Pope Nicholas III to withdraw a threat of excommunication, intended to compel him to pay the enormous interest demanded by Italian money-lenders; though, as the archbishop wrote to the Pope, "by your Holiness's special mandate, it would be my duty to take strong measures against such lenders."⁸ The Papacy was, in a sense, "the greatest financial institution of the Middle Ages, and, as its fiscal system was elaborated, things became, not better, but worse. The abuses which were a trickle in the thirteenth century were a torrent in the fifteenth. And the frailties of Rome, if exceptional in their notoriety, can hardly be regarded as unique. Priests, it is from time to time complained, engage in

trade and ^v tale ^Tlsury: ^ CatEedraT"
 chapters lend
 money at'fijp. rates of interest. The
 profits of usury>
 like those of simony, should have been
 refused by
 churchmen, as hateful to God ; but a
 bishop of Paris,
 when consulted by a usurer as .to. the
 salvation of his
 soul, instead of urgin ^estituE ^drl-
 ecommended him to
 dedicate hisJjDrgottra. weaTtTi to the
 building of Notre-
 Dame.¹¹ /< Thus/" exclaimed St. Bernard, as
 he gazed at
 the glories of Gothic architecture, " wealth
 is drawn up
 by roges piLwealth, thus money bringeth
 money. . . . O
 vanity of vanities, yet no more vain than
 insane I The
 Church is resplendent in her walls,
 beggarlyin her poor.
 She clothes her stones in gold, and leaves her
 sons naked/ 'n